

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ORGANISED CRIME: AN UNEXPLORED PHENOMENON

In cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Mexico, the Permanent Mission of Canada and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

In commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

25 November 2019, 2:00-3:30pm

Vienna International Center (VIC), UNIS Multimedia Room, G0545



Ropa encontrada en una casa de seguridad en Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas, México. Durante una búsqueda del Colectivo Milynali Red CFC, el 24 de enero del 2017. Fotografías: Mónica González

The position, role and extent of involvement of women in organised crime is a matter deserving further research because it directly affects our perception and understanding of the nature or transnational criminal activities, reflects gender relations and helps us devise more effective ways to prevent and combat crime and craft solutions that are meaningful and cognizant of both women and men's experiences. Without understanding gender aspects in organised crime there is a

risk that we do not fully comprehend what drives it and how to build the comprehensive response necessary to combat it.¹

Crime affects, victimises and involves women at a different level compared to men, raises different concerns and examining the intersection of women and organised crime improves our own understanding of criminal justice and security, as well as it enhances our assistance towards consolidating the rule of law.

The perceptions regarding women and crime have seen a dramatic change during the past decades. As late as the 19th century, certain scholars considered that women were not physically fit to be criminals, while in the mid-20th century it was believed that women were mostly prone to be 'passive' criminals, such as becoming sex workers or neglecting their children. It was in the 1990s that more substantiated research on the roles that women played in the criminal organisations took place.

According to a report on Gender and Serious and Organised Crime issued by the Institute of Development Studies in UK, while men still play the leading role in criminal activities, women are also taking part in criminal activities at various levels. Women are more visible in crimes involving drug trafficking, extortion and money laundering. Transnational organised crime has provided new opportunities for criminal networks; likewise the changing nature of crime has also attracted more women providing them with additional markets and clients. It is also noted that female emancipation has affected the female presence in criminal networks, with women undertaking more prominent and responsible positions.

¹ E4J, Module 15 Gender and Organized Crime.



United Nations Studies Association Vienna

Email: office@unsavienna.org

Website: www.unsavienna.org

Address: Oppolzergasse 6/11, A-1010 Vienna

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the violence generated by organised crime disproportionately affects women. Human trafficking is on the increase and contributes to female victimisation.

A relatively newly researched aspect of the relation between women and organised crime is their role as participants in organised criminal groups. Through different types of criminal organisations and activities, patriarchal societal structures and traditional gender roles are perpetuated.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the United Nations Studies Association (UNSA) is organising an expert meeting on the topic of women's roles in organised crime.

The implications and importance of bringing gender into the study of organised crime will be debated, as well as women's roles and extent of involvement in organised crime.

In more details, our event aims at debating the following:

- The roles of women in organised criminal activities
- The role of women in human trafficking networks
- Organised crime related femicide



United Nations Studies Association Vienna

Email: office@unsavienna.org

Website: www.unsavienna.org

Address: Oppolzergasse 6/11, A-1010 Vienna

PANELLISTS

- Chair: H.E. Ms. Alicia Guadalupe BUENROSTRO MASSIEU, Permanent Mission of Mexico
- Colin Craig, Consultant, UNODC SHERLOC Focal Point, "Sister Ping: reflections on gender and organised crime"
- Citlalin Castañeda de la Mora, UNODC, Organised Crime and Illicit Trafficking Branch "3 cases on Gender and Organised Crime"
- Anna Alvazzi, Senior Advisor - Small Arms Survey & Chair, Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Evelyn Probst, LEFO, Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women, Vienna
- Henrike Landre, Consultant, United Nations Studies Association, UNSA Berlin